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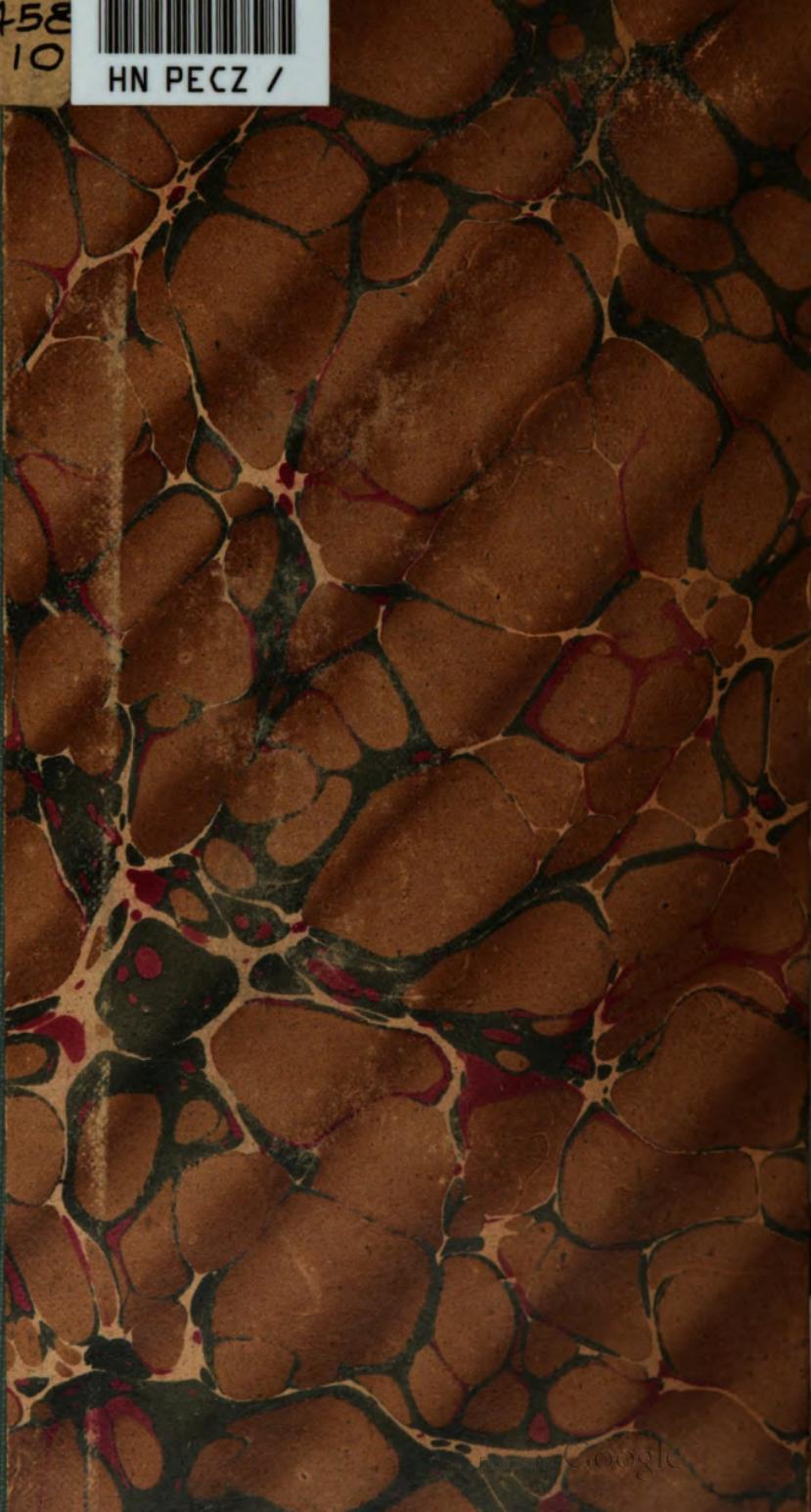
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THE WHITTLE

and Other Poems.

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ROBERT LEIGHTON.

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The Laddie's Lamentation

ON

The Loss o' His Whittle,

AND OTHER POEMS.

By ROBERT LEIGHTON.



DUNDEE: WILLIAM KIDD.

EDINBURGH AND GLASGOW: J. MENZIES & CO.

1906.

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PREFACE.

THE very favourable reception given to "Scotch Words" and "The Bapteesement o' the Bairn," and the frequently expressed desire for more of Robert Leighton's Scottish Poems—especially "The Laddie's Lamentation on the loss o' his Whittle"—in a similar easily accessible form, have induced the issue of the present small collection.

Most of the pieces selected have already appeared in the large volume of poems published in 1866; but several have had no other publicity than that derived from the columns of a newspaper, and may be considered as now appearing for the first time.

"The Whittle" was one of the author's earliest productions. About thirty years ago he wrote from Dundee that he had gained some local fame by reciting it at evening parties, and that he had been so much pressed for copies that he had got some printed on loose sheets for distribution. It has since then appeared from time to time in various forms, and is still as fresh and popular as ever.

His own rendering of it was so full of reality and humour that in company he was frequently asked to recite it, and so long as he continued able, he was seldom asked in vain. During his residence in Ayr, the annual celebrations of the 25th of January at Burns's Cottage were never allowed to pass without this contribution to the evening's entertainment. Even on the occasion of the Centenary of 1859, though his own feeling was against the introduction of anything not directly related to the topic of the evening, he was compelled to defer to the wishes of others and give it once more.

The following extract from a letter to a poetical friend, dated 30th Jan., 1859, alludes both to this and to another more appropriate poem, which will be found in the present collection:—
"Now that I am begun to settle down after the glorious and never-to-be-forgotten 25th (*our* King's birth-day), I have time to acknowledge your famous letter of the 21st, which I need hardly tell you 'thrilled my heart-strings a' to the life.' I send you a newspaper, which gives a fair report of our gathering in the 'auld clay biggin,' but it gives a miserably poor impression, compared with the thing itself.

"It was one continued outpouring of enthusiasm, yet all in the

most perfect order and regularity. It was a great and glorious success; every one seemed to be inspired, as I doubt not we were, and anything we had to do came off as if each had been animated by the very presence of the godlike ploughman. The Chairman's speech I am sure you will admire. It was a perfect soul-burst, and will turn out to be the speech of the Centenary without the smallest doubt. Just compare it with any other you drop upon; and if you meet in with one as good, let me know of it.

"I had a good deal to do throughout the night, and, in everything, came off with flying colours. First, by particular request, and by way of interlude, I gave 'The Whittle,' amid laughter and applause. The chair pronounced it 'a genuine thing,' and there was no end of demands for copies. But what pleased me most was the announcement by a Sheffield gentleman, that if I lost one whittle I should find another, for he would send me the best that Sheffield could turn out.*

"My crowning triumph was the poem written for the occasion. I was afraid that after a grand one by our worthy croupier, † my short production would fall flat, but to my delight, almost every verse was cheered, and at the close of it the company rose *en masse* and drank my health. I then 'largely lived' the remainder of the night in a state of the most glorious enjoyment.

"I do not think there was another gathering in the 'three kingdoms' with half the enthusiasm in it. What else could be expected? Think of the roof under which we sat! It was an occasion truly worth the living for.

"I could say much more about this great nicht; but you must try and gather from the newspapers and this imperfect sketch together some faint glimmering of what the Centenary was within the 'auld clay biggin'."

The last poem in this collection, "Sailing up the Firth," was the last but one ("The Bapteesement o' the Bairn") that he wrote. It is the partial record of his last journey in the summer of 1868.

On the 10th May, 1869, he died, at the early age of 47, leaving a widow and five children to mourn the removal of the light of their home.

* A promise which was handsomely fulfilled.

† The late Mr. Robert Story, of Somerset House.

THE LADDIE'S LAMENTATION ON THE LOSS O' HIS WHITTLE.

My Whittle's lost! Yet, I dinna ken;
Lat's ripe—lat's ripe my pouch again.
Na! I ha'e turn'd ower a' that's in'd,
But ne'er a Whittle can I find:—
A bit cauk, and a bit red keel—
The clamp I twisted aff my heel—
A bit auld shoe, to mak' a sling—
A peerie, and a peerie-string—
The big auld button that I faund
When crossin' through the fallow land—
A bit lead, and a pickle thrums—
And, last of a', some ait-cake crums.

Yet aye I turn them o'er and o'er,
Thinkin' I'd been mista'en before;
And aye my hand, wi' instinctive ettle,
Gangs to my pouch to seek my Whittle.

I doot it's lost!—how, whar, and whan,
Is mair than I can understan':—
Whether it jamp out o' my pouch
That time I loupit ower the ditch,—
Or whether I didna tak' it up
When I cut a handle for my whup,—
Or put it in at the wrang slit,
And it fell through, doon at my fit.

But mony a gate I've been since then,
Ower hill and hallow, muir and fen,—
Outside, inside, but and ben:
I doot I'll never see'd again!

Made o' the very best o' metal,
I thocht richt muckle o' my Whittle!
It aye cam' in to be o' use,
Whether out-by or in the hoose,—
For slicin' neeps, or whangs o' cheese,
Or cuttin' out my name on trees;
To whyte a stick, or cut a string,
To mak' windmills, or onything.—
Wi' it, I was richt whare'er I gaed,
And a' was wrang when I didna hae'd.
I ken na how I'll do withoot it;
And, faith, I'm michty ill aboot it!
I micht as weel live wantin' vittle
As try to live withoot my Whittle.

Yon birkies scamperin' doon the road—
I'd like to join the joysome crowd;
The very air rings wi' their daffin',
Their rollickin', hallooin', laughin'!
Flee on, my lads, I'll bide my lane;
My heart hings heavy as a stane;
My feet seem tied to ane-anither;
I'm clean dung doited a' thegither.
Hear, how they rant, and roar, and rattle!
Like me, they hinna lost a Whittle.

It was the only thing o' worth
 That I could ca' my ain on earth:
 And aft I wad admeerin' stand,
 Haudin' the Whittle in my hand;
 Breathin' upon its sheenin' blade,
 To see how quick the breath wad fade;
 And weel I kent it wad reveal
 The blade to be o' richt guid steel.

Puir Whittle! whar will ye be now?
 In wood? on lea? on hill? in howe?
 Lyin' a' cover'd ower wi' grass?
 Or sinkin' doon in some morass?
 Or may ye be already fund,
 And in some ither body's hand?
 Or will ye lie till, ruisted o'er,
 Ye look like dug-up dirks of yore?—
 When we're a' dead, and sound eneuch,
 Ye may be turn'd up by the pleuch!
 Or fund i' the middle o' a peat,
 And sent to Edinbruch in state!
 There to be shown—a wond'rous sicht—
 The Jocteleg o' Wallace Wicht!

Thus, a' the comfort I can bring
 Frae thee, thou lost, lamented thing!
 Is to believe that, on a board,
 Wi' broken spear, and dirk, and sword,
 And shield, and helm, and ancient kettle,
 May some day lie my rusty Whittle!

JOHN AND TIBBIE'S DISPUTE.

JOHN Davison and Tibbie, his wife,
 Sat toastin' their taes ae nicht,
 When something startit ir the fluir,
 And blinkit by their sicht.

“Guidwife,” quoth John, “did ye see that moose?
 Whar sorra was the cat?”

“A moose?”—“Ay, a moose.”—“Na, na, Guidman,—
 It wasna a moose, 'twas a rat.”

“Ow, ow, Guidwife, to think ye've been
 Sae lang aboot the hoose,
 An' no to ken a moose frae a rat!
 Yon wasna a rat! 'twas a moose.”

“I've seen mair mice than you, Guidman—
 An' what think ye o' that?
 Sae haud your tongue an' say nae mair—
 I tell ye, it was a rat.”

“*Me* haud my tongue for *you*, Guidwife!
 I'll be maister o' this hoose—
 I saw't as plain as een could see't,
 An' I tell ye, it was a moose!”

“If you're the maister o' the hoose,
 It's I'm the mistress o't;
 An' *I* ken best what's in the hoose—
 Sae I tell ye, it was a rat.”

“Weel, weel, Guidwife, gae mak' the brose,
An ca' it what ye please.”

So up she rose, and made the brose,
While John sat toastin' his taes.

They supit, and supit, and supit the brose,
And aye their lips play'd smack;

They supit, and supit, and supit the brose,
Till their lugs began to crack.

“Sic fules we were to fa' oot, Guidwife,
Aboot a moose”—“A what!

It's a lee ye tell, an' I say again
It wasna a moose, 'twas a rat !”

“Wad ye ca' me a leear to my very face?
My faith, but ye craw croose !

I tell ye, Tib, I never will bear't—
"Twas a moose !” “ 'Twas a rat !” “ 'Twas a moose !”

Wi' her spoon she strack him ower the pow—
“Ye dour auld doit, tak' that—

Gae to your bed ye cankered sumph—
"Twas a rat !” “ 'Twas a moose !” “ 'Twas a rat !”

She sent the brose caup at his heels,
As he hirpled ben the hoose ;
Yet he shoved oot his head as he stekkit the door,
And cried, “ 'Twas a moose ! 'twas a moose !”

But, when the carle was fast asleep,
 She paid him back for that,
 And roar'd into his sleepin' lug,
 " 'Twas a rat ! 'twas a rat ! 'twas a rat ! "

The de'il be wi' me if I think
 It was a beast ava !—
 Neist mornin', as she sweepit the fluir,
 She faund wee Johnnie's ba' !

PEASE BROSE.

THE mighty earl of Eglinton,
 With lords and ladies fair,
 Over his wide domain has gone,
 To hunt the timid hare.

Over the lawns, and across the brooks,
 And adown the rushy dells;
 Through woods that ring with noisy rooks,
 And along the clanging fells.

But a sudden storm o'erran the day
 As they scour'd an open field;
 And fain were they to bend their way
 To a tenant's lowly bield.

As in beneath the sheltering sheds
The courtly riders wheel,
They come on a group of curly heads
Around their mid-day meal.

And some remark'd their sun-bleach'd hair,
And some their bright blue eyes ;
But what the nature of their fare,
No lordling could surmise !

Then turn'd they to the earl, each one—
Not even his earlship knows.
“ What's that you eat ? ” asked Eglinton.
They answer him—“ Pease Brose.”

“ Pease Brose to dinner ! brose alone !
With neither boil nor stew !
But say, what did you breakfast on ? ”
They answer—“ Pease Brose, too ! ”

“ Such food for pigs were better fit ! —
Yet say, my little men,
What kind of supper will you get ? ”—
“ Ou, juist Pease Brose again ! ”

“ Pease Brose ! and still again Pease Brose !
What does your father do
With all the oats and wheat he grows ?
Eggs, cheese, and butter too ? ”

The eldest cries, with half a frown,
 As down his spoon he throws,—
 “ That greedy sinner, Eglinton,
 Leaves naething but Pease Brose.”

The red broke through the earl’s pale face,
 The blue broke through the day ;
 He spurr’d his charger to the chase,
 And swiftly they rode away.

But the curly heads cours’d in his mind—
 For so the story goes,—
 And ever after that they dined
 On better than Pease Brose.

THE WEE HERD LOON.

O THAT I were the wee herd loon
 That basks upo’ yon sunny lea !
 Ilk ither wish I wad lay doon,
 A laddie herdin’ kye to be.

I’d lose the little lear I ha’e,
 And learn the herdie’s simple arts—
 To build a housie ’mang the strae ;
 To mak’ wee neep and tawtie carts ;
 To mak’ a kep o’ rashies green,
 And learn the herdie’s gleesome lauch ;
 To mak’ a rattle for the wean,
 Or cut a whistle o’ the sauch ;

To licht a fire upon the muir,
 That a' the herdies may sit doon;
 Or set the whins on bleezin' fire,
 That a' the herdies may rin roun' ;

To plait a whup for drivin' kye,
 And learn the herdie's sangs to sing,
 And wi' the herdie's hooin' cry,
 Gar a' the echoing woodlands ring;

To climb the green-wood trees sae high,
 And shogin' sit amang the boughs,
 And watch the birdies flittin' bye,
 Or mark the burnie as it rows ;

To mak' wind-mills and water-wheels ;
 To be ilk thing that's herdie like—
 A wee-thing fear'd o' ghaists and de'il's,
 Or ony ither uncannie tyke ;—

Get shoon wi' clampit heels and taes,
 And five fu' rows o' muckle tackets ;
 Corduroy and fustian claes,
 Wi' pouches fu' o' queer nick nackets.

O blithesome are the herdie's ways !
 I had a wee, wee tastin' o' them ;
 But Time's a flood that never stays—
 A flood that beats mankind to fathom,—
 It wafted me frae herdin' days
 Ere I was weel begun to know them !

SPUNK JANET'S CURE FOR LOVE.

I'VE vow'd to forget him again and again;
 But vows are as licht as the air is, I trow;
 For something within me aye comes wi' a sten',
 And dunts on my heart till I gi'e up the vow.

I gaed to Spunk Janet, the spaewife, yestreen—
 I've often heard folk o' her wisdom approve;—
 Quoth she, "It's your fortune you're wantin', I ween?"—
 "Na! Janet," quoth I, "will ye cure me o' love?"

"I'll try it," quoth she; "say awa' wi' your tale,
 And tell me the outs and the ins o' it a' ;
 Does love mak' ye lichtsome', or does't mak' ye wail ?
 Ye see, lass, I ken it does ane o' thae twa."

"Aweel, then, to tell you the truth o' it, Janet,
 There's sometimes I'm clean overflowin' wi' glee,
 And ither times, woman, I'm no fit to stan' it,—
 Ye'd think I wad greet oot the sicht o' my ee.

"But then there's the laddie, *I* never can get him,
 And here am I ready and willin' to pay,
 Gin ye'll play some cantrip to mak' me forget him—
 The thochts o' him deave me by nicht and by day."

"I'll e'en try my skill on't," quoth Janet, "I shall;—
 The cost o' my coonsel is but half-a-croon,—
 Hooever, i' the first place, ye ken the Witch-walle,
 That bonnie clear spring at the end o' the toon:—

“When the sun frae his bed is beginnin’ to teet,
 Gang ye ilka mornin’, blaw weet or blaw wind,
 And sit by the wallie, and dip in your feet,
 Withoot e'er a thocht o’ the lad in your mind.

“Do this for a week, and the cure will be wrocht—
 But, mind ye, tak’ care o’ what comes in your head !
 If e'er it should chance that *the lad* be your thocht,
 Like mist o’ the mornin’ the cantrip will fade !”

Thus ended Spunk Janet: I paid her the fee;
 And by her directions I promised to bide :
 To-morrow the cantrip begins, I maun be,
 By the first peep o’ day, at the Witch-wallie’s side.
 The cauld o’ the water I weel may endure ;
 But, then, there’s *the thocht*, it’s the warst o’ it a’ :
 For if ower the thochts o’ my mind I had pow’r,
 I wadna ha’e needed Spunk Janet ava !

THE NEGLECTED CANARY.

Overhead in the lattice high
 Our little golden songster hung,
 Singing, piping merrily,
 With dulcet throat and clipping tongue ;
 Singing from the peep of morning
 To the evening’s closing eye,
 When the sun in blue was burning,
 Or when clouds shut out the sky ;
 Foul or fair, morn, eve, or noon,
 Its little pipe was still in tune.

Its breast was fill'd with fairy shells
That gave sweet echo to its note,
And strings of tiny silver bells
Rang with the pulsings of its throat;
Song all through its restless frame,
Its very limbs were warbling strings;
I well believe that music came
E'en from the tippings of its wings;
Piping early, late and long,
Mad with joy and drunk with song!
O, welcome to thy little store,
Thy song repays it o'er and o'er.

But playful June brought holidays,
And bade our city hearts prepare
To leave awhile our beaten ways
For sandy shore and breezy air.
Some busy days the needles flew,
And, though no special heed it drew,
Our warbler up above us there
Was each one's joy—but no one's care.
The noise of preparation rang
From room to room, from head to head,
Until our little minstrel sang
Almost unheeded, and—unfed;
Singing on with trustful lay,
Piping through the livelong day.

But how it spared its ebbing well,
Or how eked out its lessening meal,

We may but guess, we cannot tell—
 We only think, and sadly feel.
 It saw the kittens on the floor
 Regaled with plenty from our board;
 It saw the crumbs swept from our door,
 Feeding the sparrows in the yard.
 Ah! were those prison wires away,
 And were it only free as they!

We know not if its song grew weak
 As thirst and hunger gnaw'd apace;
 And when to the accustom'd place,
 It came its food and drink to seek,
 We cannot tell if bleak despair
 Rose in its breast when none was there!
 Or whether springing to its perch,
 It piped again the merry strain,
 Alighting to renew its search—
 Search and sing again, again.
 We cannot tell, our busy brains
 Unconsciously drank in its strains;
 Nor miss'd at morning, noon, or night,
 The sweet unrecognised delight.

But when the day to leave came round,
 “Ah, who will tend the bird?” we said,
 ‘Chirp, chirp! sweet, sweet! Alas! no sound
 Of wing or note! And is it fled?”
 We look'd into the cage and found

Our little minstrel cold and dead!
And scatter'd on its little floor
The chaffy remnants of its store;
The last drop in its well was drain'd,
And not a grain of seed remained.

We laid it in a little grave,
And wondered how so small a thing
Had ever piped the merry stave
That made our hearts and household ring.
Surely it was not this that sung,
But something that has pass'd away—
The life that rang through limb and tongue—
Ay, call it spirit if we may;
Which haply in some other sphere
Repeats the song that charm'd us here.
For life is sacred—great and small—
And He that notes the sparrow's fall
May keep a higher home for all.

FOR THE CENTENARY OF ROBERT BURNS.

THE world is old! States, Empires, Kings,
Have risen, ruled, and pass'd away;
Yet David harps, and Homer sings,
And he of Avon speaks to-day.

The living song will still abide;
And when our age is dust in urns,
The world, as now, will own with pride,
Its life-long debt to Robert Burns.

His touch was universal birth;
He set his native streams to tune,
And every corner of the earth
Knows Nith and Lugar, Ayr and Doon.

His homes we seek, his haunts we trace,
Wherever thought of him is found;
We follow him from place to place,
And all is consecrated ground.

On things that disregarded lie
His look bequeath'd a priceless dower:
The trodden daisy caught his eye,
And blossom'd an immortal flower.

Love's tender throes with him became
A sweet religion; and he poured
Such floods of beauty round a name,
That all men love whom he adored.

The patriot-hero's brows he bound
With wreaths, eternal as the sun:
The lowly honest man he crown'd;
He made the king and beggar one.

For well he knew that *Lord*, or *King*
Was but a word. With deeper scan,
He made both peer and peasant sing
Their highest title still was—*Man*.

In “shooting folly as it flew,”
There never was a deadlier aim;
And even those his satire slew,
Are joint partakers of his fame.

He lash'd the bigot; his the creed
Embracing all humanity;
A conscience clear in word and deed—
One Father, God; and brethren, we.

And if we blame the sparkling rhymes
That made the maddening cup sublime,
Think only of the alter'd times,
And give the censure to the time.

In humour, friendship, pity, worth;
In themes that change not with the day—
Broad nature, felt o'er all the earth—
His genius holds unmeasur'd sway.

Great Prince of song! to mark thy fame,
O for a moment of thy pen!
'Twere needless pains—thy living name
Is written on the hearts of men.

Our gilt makes not thy gold more bright;
But hearts enrich'd would yield returns:
A world of homage meets to-night,
And every thought breathes ROBERT BURNS.

SAILING UP THE FIRTH.

UPROSE the sun through opening clouds of grey,
And at his touch the misty hills unveiled,
And all gave promise of a glorious day
As up the Firth we sailed.

At every step he took, the upper clouds
Thinned into gauze; the wakening morn look'd
through,
And soon withdrawing e'en her gauzy shrouds,
Came forth in radiant blue.

A rippling breeze was with us, just enough
To turn the waters into crisping curls;
You could not say the Firth was calm or rough—
It danced in crested pearls.

Along the rocky ribs of Galloway
A margin of white foam crept to and fro;
And up the steep cliffs rose the snowy spray;
Silent to us as snow.

Then into view swung Ailsa Craig's huge bulk,
And raised an old-world rapture in the blood ;
Far off it loomed like some great stranded hulk,
Left there by Noah's flood.

As we approached, our paltry tongues were stilled ;
The bold sky-pictured craig stood more defined ;
We sailed within a presence now that filled,
And e'en distressed, the mind.

Round its sun-burnished peak the sea-birds flew
In idle numbers never to be told ;
They wheel'd and slid across the skiey blue,
Like sunbeam specks of gold.

And still we strove the mighty rock to clasp
"As one big grandeur" all unto the breast ;
Its greatness only mocked our feeble grasp,
And on we sailed distressed.

Along our starboard lay the Carrick shore,
And Kyle, the classic, hid in warm white haze ;
However hid, revealed for evermore
To the poetic gaze :

The bonnie Doon, and Cassillis Downans green,
The Twa Brigs, flying almost side by side,
The ancient town of Ayr, and scene by scene
Of Tam o' Shanter's ride.

And on our left lay Arran, sharp and clear,
Its Holy Isle, and hidden loch behind,
Within whose reaches ships for shelter steer,
When storms are in the wind.

But Goatfell, with the tattered Arran peaks,
Took all our eyes—piled up so sheer and high !
'Twas Nature's easel—this her freak of freaks,
Her canvas the blue sky.

A sudden cloud came o'er them, and anon
The Arran hills in dark-blue blackness lay ;
Surely not all the Highlands can put on
So grim a scowl as they !

They were alive with passion ; we beheld
Their knitting eyebrows and their gleaming eyes ;
But soon their dark brows lifted, and they smiled
Grandly at our surprise.

Then, also on our left, the Isle of Bute ;
So like to what a paradise should be,
That all declared the name would better suit
With an accented é.

There Kean, the tragic, built himself a cot
Beside its little lake, a sylvan scene,
And thought to cast in solitude his lot ;
Alas, for tragic Kean !

As well expect the lion to turn hound,
The eagle to forget the soaring wing;
He came to Bute and solitude, but found
The play was still the thing.

Upon our right the Cumbraes, sister isles,
Were passed with small remark, though fairy splores,
And devil-builded dykes, and warlock wiles
Are rife about their shores.

Then landward Largs, with its old battle-field,
Where Alexander fought the invading Dane,
And made him the last hope of conquest yield,
Never to come again.

But all around us Beauty infinite,
And History, and Old Tradition vied
Which should be minister of most delight,
And preached from side to side;

Till Greenock's noisy piers lay on our beam,
And luggage dragged us back to common earth,
And finger-pointing porters broke our dream
Of sailing up the Firth.

Scotch Words.

THEY speak in riddles north beyond the Tweed.
The plain, pure English they can deftly read ;
Yet when without the book they come to speak,
Their lingo seems half English and half Greek.

Their jaws are *rafts*; their hands when closed
are *neives*;

Their bread's not cut in slices but in *sheives*;
Their armpits are their *oxters*; palms are *luifs*;
Their men are *chields* ; their timid fools are *cuiiffs*;
Their lads are *callants*, and their women *kim-
mers*;

Good lassies *denty queans*, and bad ones *limmers*.
They *thole* when they endure, *scart* when they
scratch;

And when they give a sample it's a *swatch*.
Scolding is *flytin'*, and a long palaver

SCOTCH WORDS.

Is nothing but a *blether* or a *haver*.

This room they call the *butt*, and that the *ben*;

And what they do not know they *dinna ken*.

On keen, cold days they say the wind *blaws snell*.

And when they wipe their nose they *dicht* their *byke*;

And they have words that Johnson could not spell,

As *umph'm*, which means—anything you like:

While some, tho' purely English, and well-known,

Have yet a Scottish meaning of their own:—

To *prig's* to plead, beat down a thing in cost;

To *coff's* to purchase, and a cough's a *host*;

To *crack* is to converse; the *lift's* the sky;

And *bairns* are said to *greet* when children cry.

When lost, folk never ask the way they want—

They *speir* the *gate*; and when they yawn they
gaunt.

Beetle with them is *clock*; a flame's a *lowe*;

Their straw is *strae*; chaff *cauff*, and hollow *howe*;

A *pickle* means a few; *muckle* is big;

And a piece of crockeryware is called a *pig*.

Speaking of pigs—when Lady Delacour
Was on her celebrated Scottish tour,

SCOTCH WORDS.

One night she made her quarters at the "Crown,"
The head inn of a well known county town.
The chambermaid, in lighting her to bed,
Before withdrawing, curtsied low, and said—

"This nicht is cauld, my leddy, wad ye please,
To hae a pig i' the bed to warm your taes?"

"A pig in the bed to tease! What's that you say?
You are impertinent—away, away!"

"Me impudent! no, mem—I meant nae harm,
But just the greybeard pig to keep ye warm."

"Insolent hussy, to confront me so!
This very instant shall your mistress know.
The bell—there's none of course—go, send her
here."

"My mistress, mem, I dinna need to fear:
In sooth, it was hersel' that bade me speir.
Nae insult, mem; we thocht ye wad be gled,
On this cauld nicht, to hae a pig i' the bed."

SCOTCH WORDS.

“Stay, girl; your words are strangely out of place,
And yet I see no insult in your face.
Is it a custom in your country, then,
For ladies to have pigs in bed wi’ them?”

“Oh, quite a custom wi’ the gentles, mem;
Wi’ gentle ladies, ay, and gentle men;
And, troth, if single, they wad sairly miss
Their het pig on a cauldron nicht like this.”

“I’ve seen strange countries—but this surely beats
Their rudest makeshifts for a warming-pan.
Suppose, my girl, I should adopt your plan,
You would not put the pig between the sheets?”

“Surely, my leddy, and nae itherwhere:
Please, mem, ye’ll find it do the maist guid there.”

“Fie, fie, ‘twould dirty them, and if I keep
In fear of that, you know, I shall not sleep.”

“Ye’ll sleep far better, mem. Tak’ my advice;
The nicht blaws snell—the sheets are cauld as ice,

SCOTCH WORDS.

I'll fetch you up a fine, warm, cozy pig;
I'll mak' ye sae comfortable and trig,
Wi' coortains, blankets, every kind o' hap,
And warrant ye to sleep as soond's a tap.
As for the fylin' o' the sheets—dear me,
The pig's as clean outside as pig can be.
A weel-closed mooth's eneuch for ither folk,
But if ye like, I'll put it in a poke."

" But, Effie—that's your name, I think you said—
Do you yourself, now, take a pig to bed ? "

" Eh ! na, mem, pigs are only for the great,
Wha lie on feather beds, and sit up late.
Feathers and pigs are no for puir riff-raff—
Me and my neiber lassie lies on cauff."

" What's that—a calf ! If I your sense can gather,
You and the other lassie sleep together—
Two in a bed, and with the calf between ;
That, I suppose, my girl, is what you mean ? "

" Na, na, my leddy—'od ye're jokin' noo—

SCOTCH WORDS.

We sleep thegither, that is very true—
But nocht between us: wi' our claes all aff,
Except our sarks, we lie *upon* the cauff."

"Well, well, my girl ! I am surprised to hear
That we of English habits live so near
Such barbarous customs.—Effie, you may go:
As for the pig, I thank you, but—no, no—
Ha, ha ! good night—excuse me if I laugh—
I'd rather be without both pig and calf."

On the return of Lady Delacour,
She wrote a book about her northern tour,
Wherein the facts are graphically told,
That Scottish gentlefolks, when nights are cold,
Take into bed fat pigs to keep them warm;
While common folk, who share their beds in
halves—
Denied the richer comforts of the farm—
Can only warm their sheets with lean, cheap
calves.

The Bapteesement o' the Bairn.

OD, Andra, man! I doot ye may be wrang
To keep the bairn's bapteesement aff sae lang.
Supposin' the fivver, or some quick mischance,
Or even the kinkhost, whup it aff at once
To fire and brimstane, in the black domains
Of unbelievers and unchristen'd weans—
I'm sure ye never could forgie yoursel',
Nor cock your head in Heaven, wi' it in Hell.

Weesht, Meggie, weesht! name not the wicked
place,
I ker' I'm wrang, but Heaven will grant us
grace.
I havena been unmindfu' o' the bairn,
Na, thocht on't till my bowels begin to yearn.
But, woman, to my sorrow, I have found
Our minister is anything but sound;

THE BAPTEESEMENT O' THE BAIRN.

I'd sooner break the half o' the commands
Than trust a bairn's bapteesement in his hands.
I wadna say our minister's depraved;
In fact, in all respects he's weel behaved:
He veesits the haill pairish, rich and puir;
A worthier man, in warldly ways, I'm sure
We couldna hae; but, och! wae's me, wae's me!
In doctrine points his head is all agley.
Wi' him there's no Elect—all are the same;
An honest heart, and conduct free frae blame,
He thinks mair likely, in the hour o' death,
To comfort ane than a' your bible faith:
And e'en the Atonement, woman, he lichtlies so,
It's doubtfu' whether he believes't or no!
Redemption, too, he almost sets aside,
He leaves us hopeless, wandering far and wide,
And whether saved or damn'd we canna tell,
For every man must e'en redeem himsel'!
Then on the Resurrection he's clean wrang;
"Wherfore," says he, "lie in your graves sae
lang?
"The speerit is the man, and it ascends
The very instant that your breathing ends;

THE BAPTEESEMENT O' THE BAIRN.

The body's buried, and will rise nae mair,
Tho' a' the horns in Heaven should rowt and
rair."

Sometimes he'll glint at Robbie Burns's deil,
As if he were a decent kind o' chiel;
But to the doonricht Satan o' the Word,
Wae's me! he disna pay the least regard.
And Hell he treats sae brief and counts sae sma',
That it amounts to nae sic place ava.
O dear, to think our prayers and holy chaunts,
And all the self-denyings of us saunts,
Are not to be repaid by the delight
Of hearing from that region black as night,
The yelling, gnashing, and despairing cry
Of wretches that in fire and brimstane lie!
'Twill never do, guidwife; this daft divine
Shall ne'er lay hands on bairn o' yours and
mine.

Ye're richt, guidman, rather than hands like his
Bapteese the bairn, we'll keep it as it is—
For aye an outlin' wi' its kith and kin—
A hottentot, a heathen steep'd in sin!

THE BAPTEESEMENT O' THE BAIRN.

Sin, did ye say, guidwife? ay, there again
Our minister's the erringest of men.
Original sin he almost lauchs to scorn,
And says the purest thing's a babe new born,
Quite free from guile, corruption, guilt, and all
The curses of a veesional fall—
Yes "veesional," was his very word!
Bapteese our bairn! it's morally absurd!

Then, Andra, we'll just let the baptism be,
And pray to Heaven the bairn may never dee.
If Providence, for ends known to itsel',
Has ower us placed this darken'd infidel,
Let's trust that Providence will keep us richt,
And aiblins turn our present dark to licht.

Meggie, my woman, ye're baith richt and wrang;
Trust Providence, but dinna sit ower lang
In idle hope that Providence will bring
Licht to your feet, or ony ither thing.
The Lord helps them that strive as weel as trust,
While idle faith gets naething but a crust.
So says this heathen man—the only truth

THE BAPTEESEMENT O' THE BAIRN.

We've ever gotten frae his graceless mooth.
Let's use the means, and Heaven will bless the
end;
And, Meggie, this is what I now intend—
That you and I, the morn's morn, go forth
Bearing the bairn along unto the north,
Like favoured ones of old, until we find
A man of upricht life, and godly mind,
Sound in the faith, matured in all his powers,
Fit to bapteese a weel-born bairn like ours.—
Now then, the parritch—flesh maun e'en be fed—
And I'll wale out a chapter;—syne to bed.

Eh, but the morning's grand! that mottled gray
Is certain promise o' a famous day.
But Meggie, lass, your gettin' tired I doot:
Gie me the bairn; we'll tak' it time aboot.

I'm no' that tired, and yet the road looks lang;
But Andra, man, whar do you mean to gang?

No very far: just north the road a wee,

THE BAPTEESEMENT O' THE BAIRN

To Leuchars manse; I'se warrant there we'll see
A very saunt—the Reverend Maister Whyte—
Most worthy to perform the sacred rite;
A man of holy zeal, sound as a bell,
In all things perfect as the Word itsel';
Strict in his goings out and comings in;
A man that knoweth not the taste of sin—
Except original. Yon's the manse. Wi' him
There's nae new readin's o' the text, nae whim
That veetiates the essentials of our creed,
But scriptural in thought, in word, and deed.—
Now let's walk up demurely to the door,
And gie a modest knock—one knock, no more,
Or else they'll think we're gentles. Some ane's
here.
Stand back a little, Meggie, and I'll speir
If Maister Whyte—Braw day! my lass, we came
To see if Mr. Whyte—

He's no at hame!
But he'll be back sometime the nicht, belyve;
He started aff, I reckon, aboot five
This mornin', to the fishin'—

THE BAPTEESEMENT O' THE BAIRN.

Save us a'!

We're ower lang here—come, Meggie, come awa.
Let's shake the very dust frae aff our feet;
A fishin' minister! And so discreet
In all his ministrations! But he's young—
Maybe this shred of wickedness has clung
This lang aboot him, as a warning sign
That he should never touch your bairn and mine—
We'll just haud north to Forgan manse, and get
Auld Doctor Maule—in every way most fit—
To consecrate the wean. He's a divine
Of auld experience, and stood high langsyne,
Ere we were born; in doctrine clear and sound,
He'll no be at the fishin' I'll be bound.
Wae's me, to think the pious Maister Whyte
In catchin' troots should tak' the least delight!

But, Andra man, just hover for a blink,
He mayna be sae wicked as we think.
What do the Scriptures say? There we are told
Andrew and Peter, James and John of old,
And others mentioned in the Holy Word,
Were fishermen—the chosen of the Lord.

THE BAPTEESEMENT O' THE BAIRN.

I'm weel aware o' that, but ye forget,
That when the Apostles fished 'twas wi' the **net**.
They didna flee about like hieland kerns,
Wi' hair lines, and lang wands whuppin' the
burns;
No, no, they fished in the lake o' Galilee,
A Bible loch, almost as big's the sea.
They had their cobles, too, wi' sails and oars,
And plied their usefu' trade beyond the shores.
Besides, though first their trade was catchin
fish—
An honest craft as ony ane could wish—
They gave it up when called upon, and then,
Though they were fishers still, it was o' men.
But this young Maister Whyte first got a call
To fish for men, and—oh, how sad his fall!—
The learned, pious, yet unworthy skoot,
Neglects his sacred trust to catch a troot!
Now here comes Forgan manse amang the trees,
A cozie spot, weel skoogit frae the breeze.
We'll just walk ane by ane up to the door,
And knock and do the same's we did before.
The doctor's been a bachelor a' his life;

THE BAPTEESEMENT O' THE BAIRN.

Ye'd almost tak' the servant for his wife,
She's such command ower a' that's said and
dune—

Hush! this maun be the cheepin' o' her shune.—
How do you do, mem? there's a bonnie day,
And like to keep sae. We've come a' the way
Frae Edenside to get this bairn bapteesed
By Doctor Maule, if you and he be pleased.

We've no objections; but the doctor's gone
A-shootin': since the shootin' time cam' on
Ae minute frae the gun he's hardly been,

The Lord protect us! Was the like e'er seen?
A shootin' minister! Think shame auld wife!
Were he the only minister in Fife
He'd never lay a hand on bairn o' mine;
Irreverent, poachin', poother-an'-lead Divine!
Let's shake the dust frae aff our shune again;
Come, Meggie, come awa; I hardly ken
Which o' the twa's the warst; but I wad say
The shootin' minister—he's auld and gray,
Gray in the service o' the kirk, and hence

THE BAPTEESMENT O' THE BAIRN.

Wi' age and service should hae gathered sense.—
Now let's consider, as we stap alang:
Doon to the Waterside we needna gang:
I'm tauld the ministers preach naething there
But cauld morality—new-fangled ware
That draps all faith and trusts to warks alone,
That gangs skin-deep, but never cleaves the bone.
We'll just haud ower—for troth it's wearin' late—
By Pickletillim, and then wast the gate
To auld Kilmeny—it slants haflins hame,
Which for the sake o' this toom, grumblin' wame,
I wish were nearer. Hech! to save my saul,
I never can get ower auld Doctor Maile
It plainly cowes all things aneath the sun!
Whaur, Meggie, whaur's your Scripture for the
gun!

Od, Andra, as we've come alang the road
I've just been kirnin' through the Word o' God,
Baith auld and new, as far as I can mind,
But not the least iota can I find.
That maks the Doctor waur than Maister Whyte,
And on his ain auld head brings a' the wyte.

THE BAPTEESEMENT O' THE BAIRN.

It does. The Word gives not the merest hint
O' guns, an' poother's never mentioned in't.
They had their bows and arrows, and their slings
And implements o' war—auld-fashioned things,
I reckon—for the dingin' doon o' toons,
And spears, and swords, and clubs for crackin'
croons;
But as for guns and shot, puir hares to kill,
There's nae authority, look whaur ye will.—
Losh, see! the sun's gaen red and looks askance;
The gloamin' fa's; but here's Kilmeny manse.

Hark, Andra! is that music that we hear,
Louder an' louder, as we're drawin' near?
It's naething else! I'se wager my new goon
The minister's frae hame, and some wild loon
Comes fiddlin' to the lasses. O, the jads!
The minister's awa—they've in their lads,
And turned the very manse into a barn,
Fiddlin' and dancin'—drinkin' too, I'se warren'!

Tod, Meggie, but ye're richt; I fear ye're richt;
And here's gray gloamin' sinkin' into nicht,

THE BAPTEESEMENT O' THE BAIRN.

While we're as near our errand's end as **whan**
This mornin' wi' the sunrise we began.
'We'll e'en gang roond upon the kitchen **door**,
And catch the ill-bred herpies at their **splore** ;
Hush ! saftly ! 'od, I dinna hear their feet,
And yet the fiddle lilts fu' deft and sweet.
It's no the little squeakin' fiddle, though ;
But ane that bums dowff in its wame and **low**.
They hear us speakin'—here's the lassie comin',—
The minister's frae hame, I hear, my woman ?

The minister frae hame ! he's nae sic thing ;
He's ben the hoose there, playin' himsel' a spring.

The minister a fiddler ! sinfu' shame !
I'd sooner far that he had been frae hame.
Though he should live as lang's Methusalem,
I'll never bring anither bairn to him !
Nor will he get the ane we've brocht ; na, na ;
Come Meggie, tak' the bairn and come awa ;
I wadna let him look upon its face :
Young woman, you're in danger ; leave this place !
Hear how the sinner rasps the rosiny strings !

THE BAPTEESEMENT O' THE BAIRN.

And nocht but reels and ither warldly springs !
Let's shake the dust, ance mair frae aff our
shune,
And leave the pagan to his wicked tune.

But Andra, let's consider : it's sae late,
We canna now gang ony ither gate,
And as we're here we'll better just haud back
And get the bairn bapteesed. What does it
mak'

Altho' he scrapes a fiddle now and then ?
King David was preferred above all men,
And yet 'twas known he played upon the harp ;
And stringèd instruments, baith flat and sharp,
Are mentioned many a time in Holy Writ.
I dinna think it signifees a bit—
The more especially since, as we hear,
It's no the little thing sae screech and skeer
That drunken fiddlers play in barns and booths
But the big gaucy fiddle that sae soothes
The speerit into holiness and calm,
That e'en some kirks hae thocht it mends the
psalm.

THE BAPTESEEMENT O' THE BAIRN.

Tempt not the man, O woman ! Meggie, I
say—

Get thee behind us, Satan !—Come away !
For he, the Evil One, has aye a sicht
Of arguments, to turn wrang into richt.
He's crammed wi' pleasant reasons that assail
Weak woman first, and maistly aye prevail ;
Then she, of course, must try her wiles on man,
As Eve on Adam did. Thus sin began,
And thus goes on, I fear, unto this day,
In spite of a' the kirks can do or say.
And what can we expect but sin and woe,
When manses are the hotbeds where they grow ?
I grieve for puir Kilmeny, and I grieve
For Leuchars and for Forgan—yea, believe
For Sodom and Gomorrah there will be
A better chance than ony o' the three,
Especially Kilmeny. I maintain—
For a' your reasons, sacred and profane,
The minister that plays the fiddle's waur
Than either o' the ither twa, by far.
And yet, weak woman, ye wad e'en return
And get this fiddler to bapteese our bairn !

THE BAPTEESEMENT O' THE BAIRN.

Na, na : we'll tak' the bairn to whence it came,
And get our ain brave minister at hame.
Altho' he may be wrang on mony a point,
And his salvation scheme sair out o' joint,
He lays it doon without the slightest fear,
And wins the heart because he's so sincere.
And he's a man that disna need to care
Wha looks into his life ; there's naething there,
Nae sin, nae slip of either hand or tongue
That one can tak' and say, "Thou doest wrong."
His theologic veesion may be skew'd ;
But, though the broken cistern he has hew'd
May let the water through it like a riddle,
He ~~neither~~ fishes, shoots, nor plays the fiddle.

Janny Mershall's Candy, O.

Tune—“I'm ower young to marry yet.”

Chorus—O, Janny Mershall, Janny Mershall,
Janny Mershall's candy, O;
I always like to patronize
Janny Mershall's candy, O.

WHEN going along the Nethergate
There's nought can be so handy, O,
As dropping in to get a stick
O' Janny Mershall's candy, O.

Ye'll get a stick as streicht's a rash,
A crookit ane, or bandy, O:
The grandest treat, for little cash,
Is Janny Mershall's candy, O.

The ladies fine come in the street,
Wi' dresses a' fu' dandy, O;
And weel they like their mou's to weet
Wi' Janny Mershall's candy, O.

JANNY MERSHALL'S CANDY, O

There's no a lass in a' Dundee,
Frae modest dame to randy, O,
But wha wad want her cup o' tea
For Janny Mershall's candy, O.

There's no a loon in a' the toon,
A Jeannie, Jock, or Sandy, O,
But wha wad want his piece at noon
For Janny Mershall's candy, O.

When weety winter wi' the hoast
Is like to rive and rend ye, O,
The best o' cures at little cost
Is Janny Mershall's candy, O.

Some uses draps o' peppermint
To kill the smell o' brandy, O;
But, by my shuith, I'm weel content
Wi' Janny Mershall's candy, O.

Then come awa', baith great an' sma',
And let your purse attend ye, O;
And while ye find a bawbee in'd,
Buy Janny Mershall's candy, O.

